



FACTS

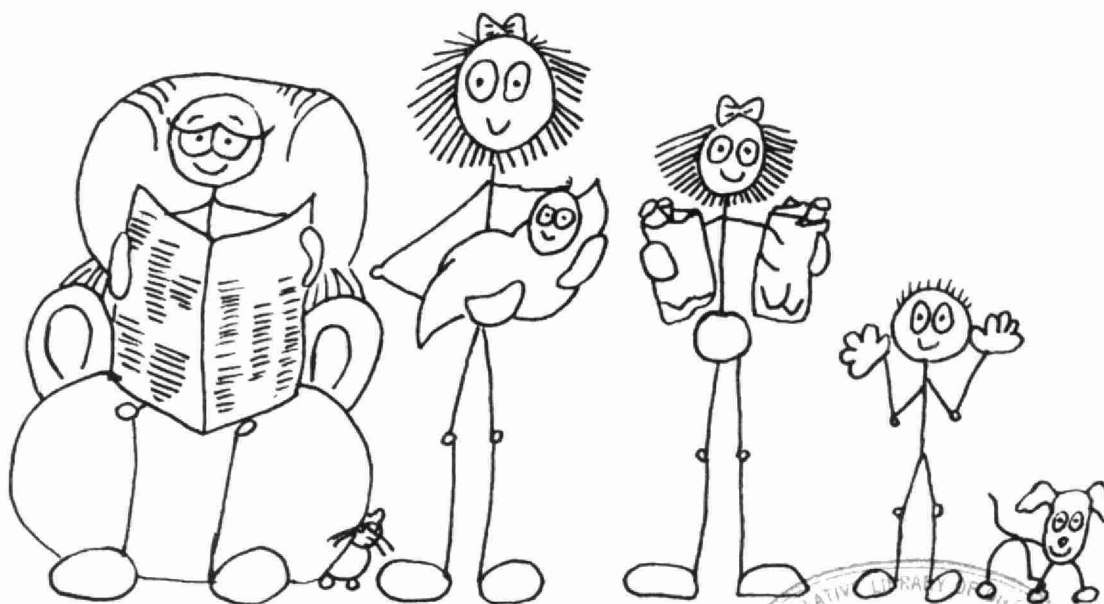
ABOUT WASTE

WHAT CAN ONE FAMILY DO?

(This fact sheet was prepared for students and teachers interested in learning about their environment.)

These tips to change some of our polluting ways were compiled originally by the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. The suggestions that follow have been reprinted by permission with a few minor changes to suit Ontario conditions.

This fact sheet will be revised with additional suggestions from you included. Ontario residents with recommendations are invited to send their ideas to the Educational Resources Co-ordinator, Information Services Branch, Ministry of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5.



BE A BACKYARD ECOLOGIST

Plan "green survival" for your own home environment. Trees help cool the air through transpiration, evaporation and summer shade. In winter they reduce wind velocity. They absorb polluted air and release air richer in oxygen and free of contaminants. Foliage screens dust and other solid pollutants from the air, and also reduces the noise pollution of streets, factories and industrial areas.

Plant materials protect soil, holding it against silting into rivers and streams, and minimize run-off from higher areas. Plants are pollution detectives, too — air pollution injury to plants will be visible before effects can be noted on animals, materials or metals.

Timely Tips

1. Check your local university agriculturist or the Pesticides Control Section, Pollution Control Branch, Ministry of the Environment about results from organic pesticides like rotenone or pyrethrum. Check all chemicals you intend to use with the Pollution Control Branch. Organic gardening books often can provide alternatives to chemicals.

2. Natural controls can be effective. Nasturtiums and chives repel aphids. Hot, soapy water kills aphids, too. A light over a tub of water will attract and destroy flying insects. A burning torch of rolled newspaper will do away with a caterpillar tent.

Copyright Provisions and Restrictions on Copying:

This Ontario Ministry of the Environment work is protected by Crown copyright (unless otherwise indicated), which is held by the Queen's Printer for Ontario. It may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes if credit is given and Crown copyright is acknowledged.

It may not be reproduced, in all or in part, for any commercial purpose except under a licence from the Queen's Printer for Ontario.

For information on reproducing Government of Ontario works, please contact ServiceOntario Publications at copyright@ontario.ca

3. Wasps chew the bugs that defoliate fruit trees; honeybees pollinate flowers; spiders help keep down the destructive insect population. You might remember these facts before making a clean sweep with insecticides. Nature built in many insect-population controls.

4. Saucers of beer placed strategically around your garden will mark the end of slugs but should be placed out of reach of inquisitive children or pets. You could also screen plants with tiny, four-inch fences of window screen or go night-slugging with a flashlight and pour a little salt on each slug. Ten minutes per night for a few weeks would solve the problem.

5. Another of nature's insect controls is birds. Bring them back by reducing chemical sprays and providing feeders. (Kitchen fat congealed on a foil plate with a mixture of bird seed or dry cereal added is a special winter treat for birds.)

6. Rotate your planting areas to confuse the pests. Remember, humus is important to soil fertility so keep a compost heap with all wet kitchen garbage, grass clippings, coffee grounds and tea leaves. Coarse material can be dug into beds; fine material is a good top dress. If you cut your lawn often, clippings are high in natural nitrogen and potash which are necessary for your lawn, so why not get this benefit instead of spending time and money on extra chemicals?

CHANGE YOUR CONSUMER HABITS

Save our shrinking forests — don't waste paper products but, remember, those you must use can lead a double life;

1. **BUY QUALITY** . . . some goods are made to be used and discarded and some are made to be used and repaired and used . . .

Make the right choices.

2. **BUY** . . . de-inked, recycled paper whenever possible for office and home use. Decomposable containers are biodegradable but plastic isn't. Bottles can be re-used for home canning and storage. Plastic containers — if unavoidable — can become fridge keepers, flower pots, craft items; don't overbuy plastic containers — they do not degrade and the petroleum used in plastic manufacture is not a renewable resource;

3. **CUT DOWN** . . . on heavy Christmas card mailing and ornate gift wrapping;

4. **LIVING** . . . Christmas trees are beautiful and can grace your garden or patio for years;

5. **REVERSE** . . . modern trends! Cloth wipes better than paper towelling; easy-care fabrics eliminate the need for paper napkins and tablecloths. Lunch kits are harder than brown bags. String bags carry groceries better than paper bags;

6. **COLORED** . . . paper products may cause no more damage than bright-white paper that has been heavily bleached. Choose less bleached papers for all uses;

7. **REMEMBER** . . . Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides have been environmentalists for years — they collect paper and bottles, and

recycle them. Refund money helps support their organizations;

8. **RE-USE** . . . envelopes you receive. Paste on a new address label and give it another trip. Some organizations actually re-use letters, employing the blank back sides as note or memo paper.

HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT — conveniences or contaminators?

1. Have your furnace checked regularly, filters cleaned or replaced annually, fire-places and furnace flues cleaned regularly. You'll do triple-good this way — save heating money, use less of our non-returnable fuel resources, and avoid the danger of chimney fires.

2. Use your fireplace environmentally. Burn only clean, dry wood — NOT soft coal, which adds to the smoke pall above. NEVER burn kitchen garbage in a fireplace as the temperature isn't high enough to combust it properly.

3. Dripping faucets waste water resources — fix them.

4. Watching certain appliances can save a great deal of electricity and, at the same time, save you money. Is your water heater too big for your consumption, and do you turn it down when away, or when you're not using great quantities of hot water? Save our dwindling hydro resources and yourself a lot of money.

5. If you must use an automatic dishwasher, limit yourself to one load a day — save power and hot water! Phosphates contribute to water pollution. Be environmentally wise by measuring carefully; use LESS rather than the stated quantity. This becomes a double saving because over-sudsing clogs machines and could cause costly appliance repairs.

6. Don't put grease, caustic fluids or filter-tip cigarettes in toilets. Caustics corrode and the others clog public sewage equipment.

7. If you use a septic tank, check your local engineering department for tips on what to flush away. NEVER put facial tissues in the toilet — they are practically indestructible and clog the tank. Chemical dyes may retard normal bacterial action in your septic tank. Follow local septic cleaning regulations regularly.

8. Decrease household garbage bulk — remove tops and bottoms and flatten cans; cut plastic bleach bottles in pieces for less bulk; separate paper, glass, metals, etc., and check local recycling agencies for disposal.

CAMPERS — abide by the rules of good citizenship and keep your campsite clean. Keep waste disposal to a minimum by burning combustible materials in your campfire. Remember the household tip of reducing garbage bulk by flattening cans, cutting plastic containers, and dispose all in waste barrels. And remember, if you carried it into a remote area you can carry it out for proper disposal. **KEEP YOUR CAMPING OR PICNIC SITE CLEAN FOR THE NEXT GROUP.**

HIKERS — if you carry your packsack full on the beginning of your hike, you can carry it back

to a garbage can to dispose of wrappings, bottles, cans, etc. Don't just drop the waste anywhere because there's not a garbage container for miles.

BOATERS — buying a new boat? The Ministry of the Environment enforces regulations which prohibit the overboard discharge of treated or untreated sewage from pleasure boats. Holding tanks and pump-out facilities are required. For additional information contact the local Ministry of the Environment office or write the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P5.

Buying a new motor? Inquire after those which do not leave oil and gas slicks on the water.

Carry a little bag in your boat for your own litter or any you might find floating on the water or discarded on beaches.

Remember, plastic bottles, bags, cups, etc., do not decompose or sink and become hazards in waterways. Dispose of these in shore containers.

Keep your boat motor in top shape. Be careful when filling your tank so no gas and oil spillage fouls the water. Old oil should be disposed of at service barges or shore.

CHANGING YOUR DRIVING HABITS

The auto is responsible for about half of all the country's air pollution, including 60 per cent of the carbon monoxide. Learn to depend less on the auto. Buy a bike, walk more and get the benefit of better health as a bonus; campaign for better transportation systems. If you must drive, use these tips.

1. Keep your engine perfectly tuned for most efficient fuel use. Have the positive crankcase valve cleaned regularly. A clogged valve may double your engine's emission. Keep the carburetor properly adjusted. Clean or replace the air filter regularly. A grimy filter can increase emissions by 75 per cent. Use no-lead or low-lead fuels. Keep spark plugs and points in good condition.

2. Don't let your engine idle needlessly — idling produces the highest concentration of pollutants.

3. Double up on use. Join or form a car pool for regular trips.

4. At the gas station, don't let them 'top' the tank — this pollution spillage will be drained into the sewage system.

5. Drive smoothly — fast acceleration and deceleration cause high pollution emission.

6. To protect your own lungs, try to avoid driving in the city during peak traffic hours. If you're stuck in a traffic jam, don't smoke. The combination will increase the amount of carbon monoxide you inhale.

OTHER DO'S AND DON'TS

DO campaign for tertiary sewage treatment plants in your area and

DON'T complain about the cost, because it's for your health and welfare.

DO shop carefully to avoid spoilage; cook just enough to avoid leftovers or use leftovers in organic compost heaps.

DON'T forget to involve the kids — even the youngest one. They have an even bigger stake in the future of the environment than you. Have a family contest to see who can devise the best anti-pollution plan for your household.

DO become involved and inform yourself about environmental protection. Hysterical protest and indictment of business or governmental action is not constructive. Remember, businessmen and government members are interested in the future too. Work together for progress. Use logic and legitimate facts.

DON'T forget that many agencies are working toward a land-use planning concept that will maintain our corner of the world. Much study and input is needed before final plans can be accepted. Do you have any expertise to add?

DO buy 'RETURNABLES' whenever possible. You will get your deposit money back. The inconvenience is minimal, when one considers the reduction in waste that will result.

DON'T THINK YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS TOO SMALL . . . you, your family and neighbors are a big part of the pollution problem, and play a big role in overcoming it.

ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

If you get a chance, visit either an incineration plant, a garbage dump or a landfill site, and discover the true meaning of the waste problem.

If the urge to investigate further ever strikes, carry out your own mini-litter survey of a park or campsite, or school yard. How much of what you find is biodegradable material? What items predominate in your collection? Are there metallic, plastic, or paper products?

If you want to go even further in your experimenting, try making your own mini-landfill site. Bury a small amount of selected garbage, such as some plastic, some plain paper, some waxed paper (such as a shredded milk carton), a couple of crushed metal containers, etc. Give this project a year before unearthing the results.

If you've got the stomach for it, check through a garbage bag sometime. Sort out the contents, and get an idea of your waste contribution. A word of caution; rubber gloves are recommended as is a 'fresh' bag of garbage.